

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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R 011057Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1142
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, SF
SUBJECT; VENDA TO BECOME INDEPENDENT IN 1979

REF: PRETORIA 1783

1. CHIEF MINISTER PATRICK MPHEPHU, MET ON APRIL 28 IN CAPE TOWN WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER AND MINISTER OF PLURAL RELATIONS, CONNIE MULDER, TO DISCUSS INDEPENDENCE ARRANGEMENTS. AFTER THE MEETING, A JOINT STATEMENT WAS ISSUED THAT SAID VENDA HAD REQUESTED INDEPENDENCE, THE SAG HAD DECIDED TO GRANT IT, AND A WORKING COMMITTEE WOULD BE APPOINTED SOON TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS. MPHEPHU TOLD PRESS REPORTERS THAT HE HOPED TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE IN MID-1979, MAYBE AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER. VORSTER IS QUOTED AS SAYING IT WAS "A GREAT HONOR" TO BE ABLE TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE AND THAT IT WOULD BE FOR "ALL VENDA PEOPLE WHEREVER THEY MIGHT BE WORKING AND LIVING AT THE MOMENT."

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2. MPHEPHU TOLD AN INTERVIEWER THAT INDEPENDENCE WOULD BENEFIT VENDA BOTH POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY. HE SAID "WE ARE STILL BUSY NEGOTIATING FOR MORE LAND AND FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE TERRITORY INTO ONE UNIT", BUT "THERE IS NO PROBLEM ABOUT TAKING INDEPENDENCE FIRST AND THEN LATER NEGOTIATING FOR MORE LAND."

3. COMMENT: MPHEPHU LEADS A HOMELAND THAT IN SOME
WAYS IS POTENTIALLY MORE VIABLE AS AN INDEPENDENT
ENTITY THAN MOST OTHERS, AS IT HAS MOST OF ITS ASSIGNED
POPULATION RESIDENT, IT IS IN A COMPARATIVELY CONTIGUOUS
BLOCK WITH ONLY TWO SEPARATE SECTIONS, AND HAS
SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURE POTENTIAL AND COAL RESERVES
(SEE PRETORIA A-151-77). ON THE OTHER HAND, MPHEPHU
FACES THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL
OPPOSITION IN SOUTH AFRICA'S HOMELANDS (REFTEL; HAS
EXPERIENCED SOME OF THE WORST STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
OF ANY HOMELAND WHEN ALL VENDA SCHOOLS CLOSED IN 1977
FOLLOWING DRAWN OUT VIOLENCE; AND IS NOT A PERSONALLY
STRONG OR CHARISMATIC LEADER. MPHEPHU HAS ASKED FOR
INDEPENDENCE WITHOUT THE FULL SUPPORT OF HIS LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY (REFTEL) AND COULD FACE SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION
FROM THAT DIRECTION AS WELL AS STUDENT ACTIVISTS.
NELSON

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Message Attributes

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